

Supporting Readiness Through Strategic Sourcing

The Army Sustainment Command is enabling readiness at the tactical point of need by implementing strategic sourcing to deliver a full range of base life and logistics support.

■ By Jerome E. Jastrab

Military operations have historically used some type of contracted support for equipment, supplies, and services. Recent reductions in the Army's force structure have caused more combat support and sustainment requirements to be met through service contracts, most notably for base life support.

Strategic sourcing is a way to leverage national capabilities to generate sustainment both at home station and during theater operations. The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Procurement is responsible for developing strategic sourcing initiatives for the Army's direct reporting units, Army commands, and Army service component commands.

As the Army's logistics integrator for contingency and sustainment support, the Army Sustainment Command has embraced strategic sourcing in its two largest contracts: the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP) and the Enhanced Army Global Logistics Enterprise (EAGLE).

From a readiness perspective, supported units expect contracted sustainment support to be responsive and flexible enough to keep pace with a fluid operational environment. From a business perspective, Congress and the Department of Defense expect contracted support to be as cost-effective as possible.

In contracting, achieving maximum flexibility within the scope of work generally results in loosely defined requirements, which can run

contrary to controlling costs. The more risk the Army asks the contractor to assume through loosely defined requirements, the more the government will pay. Strategic sourcing is a way of satisfying these two conflicting expectations; it minimizes risks to operational readiness while controlling costs.

So how does strategic sourcing improve responsiveness while controlling costs? Local command or theater service contracts can take 12 months or more to award, depending on their complexity. Using a strategic source can significantly shorten this timeline.

Because of frequent personnel rotations, overseas acquisition operations often lack personnel stability. Using a strategic source provides critical continuity and enables rotating personnel and units to modify contracts more easily in response to changing requirements.

Strategic sourcing also enables the requiring activity to control costs and ensure consistent contractor performance. By leveraging an established acquisition team that operates off of a contract vehicle that has already reached the best-practice level, units requiring contractor support can consistently receive responsive sustainment at the point of need.

LOGCAP and EAGLE follow the governing regulations for defense contracts that are solicited and awarded in the continental United States and overseas. Both contract vehicles provide Army organizations with readiness to ensure freedom of

action, extend operational reach, and prolong endurance across the full range of military operations.

LOGCAP is a reliable means of integrating operational contract support into theater planning. It provides base life support and sustainment support primarily during overseas deployments in support of contingency operations. EAGLE provides supply, maintenance, and transportation support on Army installations.

The Army Sustainment Command has developed LOGCAP and EAGLE to support the Army worldwide, and these programs currently support garrison and deployed forces in the United States, Europe, the Pacific, Africa, and the U.S. Central Command.

More information about strategic sourcing can be found online in the Procurement Knowledge Management Portal at <https://spcs3.kc.army.mil/asaalt/procurement/Strategic-Sourcing/Initiatives.aspx>.

Jerome E. Jastrab is the Army's portfolio manager for logistics management services at the Army Sustainment Command at Rock Island Arsenal, Illinois. He has a bachelor's degree in industrial technology from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. He holds master's degrees in strategic studies from the Army War College and in international relations from Troy State University. He is level III certified in life cycle logistics and level I certified in program management, and he is part of the Army acquisition workforce.